

Community reminded to conserve water

Bridget Mpande

MBOMBELA - "Water is a precious resource. It is very scarce and must be conserved at all times."

So said the Department of Water and Sanitation's Mpumalanga Provincial Operations' head, Dudu Sifunda, during an interview this publication.

She said the public needs to know the value of water, seeing as South Africa is a water-scarce country. According to her, some community members used to think water is free and they would not conserve it. She insisted that water is not free and that it is important to conserve it. "There are processes that water goes through before it reaches the public. We are currently living in a world that is changing and we no longer have plenty of water in the dams. Each and every day, our water diminishes. The population is also growing."

She said the amount of rainfall the country has received has changed, and the public needs to care for the water that we have left. "We cannot balance the water anymore, as we consume more of it now. It means there is more pressure on us for the water that is available."

She said when people waste water, it does not only affect them, but future generations, too.

Sifunda also talked about how vandalism of infrastructure and theft affects the communities negatively. She said the community members need to understand not

to keep quiet when they see people stealing and vandalising water infrastructure. "We call for the communities out there to be watchdogs."

Background:

Sifunda joined the department on November 1, 2023, from the Nkomazi Local Municipality where she had served with great aplomb. She has a Bachelor of Engineering (Chemical Engineering) degree obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2010. She started working as a graduate water process engineer at Umgeni Water in 2007 until August 2010. She was then appointed as a technical manager at

BCT Water where she assisted several municipalities, including Chief Albert Luthuli, on water issues from September 2010 until October 2012.

While at Umgeni Water, she also

contributed towards the Water Research Commission's (WRC) paper on biological nitrate removal. In November 2012, she joined Nkomazi Local Municipality as a water quality officer until May 2015. She was then promoted and appointed as a manager of water and sanitation until she left the municipality for the Department of Water and Sanitation on October 31, 2023. She was also appointed as acting director of infrastructure development in the municipality from September 2022 until February 2023.

Sifunda is registered with the Engineering Council of South Africa and is also an associate member of the Water Institute of South Africa.

Community members need to report it when they see people vandalising water infrastructure



The Mpumalanga Provincial Operations' head, Dudu Sifunda. **Photos: Bridget Mpande**